up, Sam, don't let your spirits go down?' Is my nephew right, Miss Florence?"

"We put 'God save the Queen' first, I believe," she answered, laughing; "but everybody in Australia is fond of 'Cheer up, Sam!'"

This led to my aunt asking Miss Hawke to sing, to which she consented on condition that Amelia sang first; so my cousin went to the piano and piped, in a small, blythe note, about some merry, merry man who broke an unfortunate girl's heart, and yet continued very merry, ri fol de lol! proving what odious rogues merry, merry men are. Then Miss Hawke, after a little hesitation, and a timid peep at me with her lovely eyes took her place and warbled a ballad. I have no recollection of the air; I do not remember that I gathered what the poetry was about; but, for all that, I considered it the divinest song I had ever heard. Was it some commonplace tune? were the words of the album-type, the Letitia Elizabeth Landon and broken heart and dishevelled ringlets school? Very like, very like; but no incomparable Italian artist, singing some air of matchless beauty, could have overwhelmed me with such emotions as those raised in me by Miss Hawke's simple, pretty voice; the airy, graceful, flower-like pose of her figure, her white hands, with a ring or two on them, trembling like blown snowflakes which glitter with the sparkle of ice-crystal, as they moved over the ivory keys, her rich hair taking a ruddy tinge of gold from the soft lamplight, the sweetest of little feet coquetting with the pedals.

I protest, when I think of her, I long, like Werther, to take my flowing locks in both hands and pour out my soul. Dissembling was idle. When more than a man's heart will hold is poured into it, then, like any other vessel—a hookpot or a washing-tub—it will overflow. I was perfectly sensible that there was a note of something exceedingly like impassioned admiration in the thanks I added to those of the others for her song, but I could not help it. Amelia looked at me, Sophie at her mother, and her mother fanned herself. Miss Hawkes said, "you are too kind, Mr. Seymour, to praise me so warmly; my voice is a very poor one," while my uncle observed, "I don't know; it looks to me as if Jack had a cultivated taste"—on which I gave a wild laugh.

Miss Hawke then somewhat bashfully asked if *I* would sing.

"What! before ladies," thought I. "Never." I told her that my knowledge of music did not enable me to reach to anything higher than a windlass chorus.

"Then give us one of the old chanteys, nephew," exclaimed my uncle; "'Haul the bowline!' or 'Whiskey Johnny!' or, 'Run, let the bullgine run!' Why the mere sound of those old songs takes me back forty years; and I seem to be standing in the lee scuppers up to my neck, or holding on with my eyelids as I try to roll up the fore-royal single-handed."

However I declined to sing, and they gave up pressing me. Tea was brought in, and we sat, with cups and saucers in our hands, talking a variety of small beer, until Miss Hawke, pulling a watch of the size of a sixpence from her waistband, said that it was getting late, she must go home; whereupon my uncle siad he would walk with her to her house, and half turned to me in a manner that made me hope he was going to ask me to join him; but instead, he observed, "I sha'n't be above twenty minutes, Jack. Don't go to bed, we'll have a cigar when I return." Of course, I endeavored to look satisfied and happy, though I would cheerfully have given up smoking for a month for the privilege of helping him to see Miss Hawke home.

Well, presently she came down, dressed, looking lovely in the lamplight in her bewitching hat, and said good-night to us; and I saw my uncle lurking in the hall with his wideawake on, and wished him at Jericho for leaving me behind. She left the room, but came back in a moment, crying out, in her melodious way, "Oh, I have forgotten Flora; where's my ducky, Flora?"

My uncle whistled, my aunt made a noise like a hen and my cousins peered about. I looked under the sofa and found the old creature snugged up into a ball and snoring like a young negro.

"Here's Flora," said I dropping on one knee, meaning to hand the animal out and gallantly place her in her mistress's arms; but the moment that I touched the aged beast, that was evidently very deaf, she staggered on to her legs, with her tail on end like an ensign staff on a ship's stern, snapped at my hand, and went reeling under the sofa into the room, backing away and making a most horrible, faint, barking noise.

"Don't be afraid, Mr. Seymour," said Miss Hawke; "she's the sweetest, most harmless, the dearest old thing—aren't you, Flora?" and she took the quivering, grinning, terrified, deaf, asthmatical old brute to her heart and put her lips to the worn-out skin of the creature's head and fondled it. She then went away for good, giving us all a beautiful smile as she quitted the room; and I sat down with my aunt and cousins, to chat with them until my uncle returned.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME SACRED MUSIC.

I went to bed at half past 11 that night. My aunt, in the most affectionate manner, hoped I would sleep well; my cousins bade me good-night with the kindness of sisters; my uncle accompanied me to my bed-room in order to see that I was properly cared for, and parted from me with every manifestation of cordial pleasure at my presence, begging me to feel completely at home, to do as I pleased, to ask for whatever I wanted, to enjoy myself thoroughly, and to stay as long as ever I chose.

Could mortal uncle say more to a nephew? and what a delightful, fragrant, breezy bedroom was mine! and yet, though I was in bed by 12, the lights out, not a sound to disturb me outside, save now and again a moan of night wind to rustle the flowers under the window and shake their sweetness into the dark, star-laden air, I did not close my eyes in sleep till 4 o'clock.

No Chancery litigant, whose three years' suit is in all probability to end next day; no young actor, whose first appearance in London is fixed for the following night; no distracted tradesman, with several heavy bills, renewed *ad nauseam*, falling due next morning, could have plunged and rolled upon his mattress more wearily and sleeplessly than I. To say that I was so much in love with Florence Hawke as to be unable to close my eyes through thinking of her would be to say a little too much. If ever a man fell in love at first sight, I did; I'll not deny it. I thought Miss Hawke a beautiful creature, with the manners of a queen and the sweetness of an angel; and I was in love with her, though a few hours before I had never heard of her—I had not the least idea that there was such a person in the world. But I am not going to pretend that I was such an emotional, impressionable, sentimental swab that I could be robbed of my sleep right away out of hand by the first pretty woman I had ever seen whom I felt I could marry and live happily with ever after.

And yet she was responsible for my sleeplessness, too; for I lay thinking of her until I thought myself into broad wakefulness, though I had gone tired to bed: as a man who may be hungry at his usual hour for dining, finds his appetite gone if the dinner be long delayed. Being of a somewhat imaginative mind, I pictured her as forced by her father into accepting Mr. Morecombe, and I thought of myself as going to the rescue and attacking old Hawke, and withering him up with a thousand penetrating and scathing sarcasms; and my humor actually carried me into the imagination of horsewhipping young Morecombe for being rude to me. What wit visits one in bed, where it is of no use! what conflicts one has there with one's enemies in the silence of night, and how victorious one always is!

However, I fell asleep at last, and when I was called by a servant, was thankful to find that the night was gone, and my job of kicking the bedclothes about done for the time being. There must be something very noxious and nauseous in the London air to make the breezes of the country or the sea-side the delights they are to cockney nostrils. Spite of my night of broken rest, I felt a stone lighter in weight as I moved about the room dressing myself; the atmosphere was delicious, a warm, aromatic tide that hummed pleasantly through the window, and was full of the chanting of bees, radiant with the tossing and blown flight of butterflies, and there was a sound of the throbbing life of Bristol city pulsing in it.

I found my relations in the breakfast-room; not one of those gloomy, subterraneous chambers, so called, which you find in London houses, and which are occupied by the black beetles when the family are away, but a handsome, cheerful apartment, made green and cool by the shadows of some trees which stood close against that side of the house. I was warmly greeted, and answered the kind inquiries as to the night I had passed by saying that when I fell asleep I slept like a top, which was true enough.

"I'll tell you," said my uncle, "how you may kill the time here. There is a fast mare in the stable at your disposal whenever you have a mind for a canter. Can you ride?"

"Yes, if there's pommel enough to hold on by."

"Then there is a snug phaeton in which you can drive yourself and your aunt and your cousins round the country—I don't mean Great Britain, but the neighborhood. There is the club at Bristol. I have put your name down, and you can use it while you are here. You have the sea within easy reach. Wales is not far off, and you can fetch any of the Channel ports whenever you like by steamer from Bristol. I doubt whether we shall be able to manufacture any dances for you—we have not been here long enough to be able to fill a room; but dinners I think we can promise; and what further programmes can we make out, Sophia?"

"Nothing further is wanted," said I. "It is already most hospitably abundant."

Presently my aunt said something about Florence Hawke, and asked Amelia at what hour that day Mr. Hawke was expected.

"At 5 or 6 this afternoon," was her reply. "There's an anthem I much want to hear to be sung at service this morning in the cathedral; and I arranged yesterday with Florence to go. We shall walk there, and her carriage will fetch us."

"Will you take me?" said I. "Nothing delights me so much as sacred music."

"By all means, come," answered my kind cousin.

"Miss Hawke, I hope, won't think me intrusive," said I.

"Why should she?" exclaimed the hearty, good-natured Sophie.

"Intrusive! you mean complimentary," observed my uncle. "D'ye suppose, man, she'll reckon you go for the love of music?"

The downrightness of this somewhat abashed me. "But I should like to hear the music," said I; "and is not the cathedral worth seeing?"

"Never was in it," he answered.

"I am thinking," said my aunt, addressing her husband, and then looking at her daughters as if seeking for encouragement to deliver what was in her mind, "that Mr. Hawke might—I mean, that as we cannot pretend to be ignorant of his views respecting—"

"What, my love? what do you want to say?" asked my uncle.

"Why," she continued, "he might not, perhaps, like Florence to—he might not thank us for introducing—" She could not go on, perhaps not liking to be too plain, and yet not knowing how to convey her meaning otherwise than plainly. But we all guessed what she meant, and my uncle said:

"Let old Mr. Hawke hang himself. What it is to us? If he objects to his daughter meeting young men, let him lock her up. I really cannot confine Jack to his bed-room because, being at large, he is likely to annoy Mr. Hawke by being polite to his daughter when he meets her, and by offering to accompany her and his cousin—his cousin, my dear—to hear a performance of sacred music."

"I shouldn't be too sensitive about Mr. Hawke's feelings, mamma, if I were you," said Sophie. "Why shouldn't Cousin Jack know Florence, and walk with her and Amelia? I am sure he is worth a thousand Mr. Morecombes."

"Say twenty thousand, Sophie," I exclaimed, feeling that I could hug the dear girl for her goodness and loyalty.

"I am a father myself," said uncle, lying back in his chair and taking a complacent look around the table, "and I should be sorry to do anything calculated to bother a man in his wishes concerning his children. But I am not going to trouble myself on matters I can't help. I should be sorry to call upon Mr. Hawke and tell him that, in my opinion, he is a *prig* for subordinating his daughter's happiness in the future to a twopenny anxiety to drag some poor creature of a man into the family whose one recommendation is that when his father dies he will be a baronet. I would not tell him that, I say. But d'ye suppose I'm not going to have my brother's son to stop with me, that I am going to shut my door against my own sex, because Miss Florence visits here, and old Hawke would be angry if she should go and give her heart to one of my guests, instead of reserving it—or the shell of it, for it'll be but a hollow thing she presents if she's forced to hand it over to the wrong man—instead of reserving it, I say, for the coxcomb her father wants her to have?"

"Well, I am sure I never though my remarks would have led to all this," said my aunt, ruefully. "Nobody could have a greater contempt for Mr. Hawke's notions of marriage than I. All that I meant to say was that we, as acquaintances and neighbors of his—I mean, that as Florence very often comes to see us—" Here she broke down again.

I felt it time to speak.

"Why this anxiety, aunt? Am I going to pounce upon the young lady and carry her off? Is it the dove that usually bolts with the hawk? I admit that she is a lovely girl—there would be nothing very astonishing in any guest or male friend of yours falling in love with her; but if he flattered himself on *winning* her I should either consider him demented or insufferably conceited. But as you object to my—"

"No, no," she interrupted. "I don't object—indeed not, Mr Jack. I only—what I mean is—indeed, if you don't accompany her and Amelia you'll make me feel quite uncomfortable."

This ended it, my uncle rounding it off with a burst of laughter.

I can be as fastidious in my views as my betters; and I yield to no man in respecting the right sort of parental opinions on the duties and behavior of young ladies; and when, therefore, I look back, I am unable to find the least possible impropriety in my volunteering to escort two girls to service at a cathedral to hear a particular anthem sung. But suppose I had not been strictly within, and well within, the bounds of decorum, I should still have begged my cousin to take me to the service, and risked the chance of being thought improper. My uncle was right; it was not the sacred music, it was not the cathedral, that drew me. I wanted to be in Miss Florence's company again, I wanted to enjoy the delight of being near her, of being able to see her beautiful face and to hear her sweet voice.

So, shortly after breakfast, Amelia and I left the house for Clifton Lodge (let Mr. Hawke's residence have that name), I handsomely equipped, with a gay flower that loyal and tender-hearted Sophie had pinned upon my coat while I waited in the hall for Amelia, and my cousin in bright colors, which she topped with a green parasol that gave her warm, fat face a kind of copper-like splendor. Our road took us from the valley of Avon, and when you are out of sight of that fairy-like ravine, the noble heights of rocks, the shining river that winds at bottom, and the wonders of vegetation whose rich summer hues make the whole place like a piece of tropical scenery, Clifton does not offer many points for a man to posture over in description. I own I was not greatly disturbed by the sight of dust and villas. My thoughts were considerably ahead of me—along with Miss Florence Hawke; and I believe, had the Alps been shifted by an earthquake and brought alongside, I should not have taken much notice of them.

We arrived at the house, and a very handsome building it was; square, detached, with a sort of tower upon it, and some figures of angels or graces or muses at the corners. It was as big again as my uncle's; but whether I was prejudiced by what I had heard of old Hawke, or whether the house was really suggestive as I found it, it seemed to me, for all its conservatories, its rich window drapery, its steps, pillars, and the rest of it, a cold, formal, precise-looking house. It had a look of opulent genteelness, and if I had been asked to design a house for a rich man who was without blood and anxious to procure some, Clifton Lodge is the sort of residence I should have given him.

There was a short carriage-drive to the door; we marched along with powdered boots and pulled the bell. A fellow in grand livery opened the door and conducted us to the drawing-room, quite too sumptuously furnished for my taste, much as I value the fine and the beautiful; full of gilt and marble, with a hand-painted ceiling—in short, pretty nearly as overpowering as one of Lord Bute's rooms in Cardiff Castle, which I had the honor to inspect when I visited the port of that name.

"Mighty splendid!" said I to Amelia, looking about me and missing something—I don't know what—which, had it been there, would have prevented me from finding it so hard and cold. "And this is Miss Hawke's home?"

"Is it not very magnificent?" whispered my cousin. "Mr. Hawke must have brought a lot of Australian gold with him to Clifton—for everything seems gold here. Aren't you surprised now to think how unaffected and childlike Florence is? One would suppose that a girl living in such splendor would think herself too grand for anybody but lords and ladies."

"Well," said I, "if I lived here I don't know that I should be able to walk. The earth would be too low for my boots. Surely her father ought to have a soul above the son of a baronet," said I, glaring at a lady in a cloud, blowing a trumpet, amid a grummet of flowers upon the ceiling.

"The son will be eighth baronet, when he gets it," said she. "And I believe the Morecombes are connected in various ways with about twenty titled families."

A plague upon him and his connections, thought I; and as this benediction upon him rolled up out of my soul, Miss Hawke came in, dressed for the walk. She looked surprised to see me, and slightly blushed. I presume, when the footman gave our names, she supposed I was my uncle. But the look was all the expression her surprise found, and it was replaced by a smile so uncommonly like one of pleasure that as it passed over her face my heart struck a loud whop in my bosom.

She gave me her little gloved hand to shake, said she was very glad to see me, and asked if I was going to the cathedral with them.

"Yes, if I may," said I. "When Amelia spoke of the anthem I begged leave to hear it too. I hope I am not intrusive. Nobody asked me. I am here by my own invitation."

"Why shouldn't you come?" said she, smiling, but looking shyly. "The choir is a good one. If you like sacred music you will enjoy the singing."

As we left the house I asked if the cathedral was far. "Almost far enough for a drive, if you are a bad walker," she answered.

"We shall drive back," said Amelia. "The way is nearly all down hill. Not that I very much care to use a carriage when I go to church, even on week days. I dislike seeing people roll up to a church-door as if they expected the vicar and his curates and the pew-opener and the sexton to come out and stand in a row and bow to them. It is excusable, perhaps, on a wet day, or when people are old or have the gout."

"Yes, at church we are all equals," said I, "and ought to arrive on foot—the nobleman and the chimney-sweep, the footman and the baronet."

I brought in the word *baronet* for the sake of putting a little malicious emphasis upon it; but Miss Florence took no notice. What an adorable profile was hers to turn to as I walked by her side! There was not an atom of stiffness in her talk. Had we been auld acquaintance she could not have addressed me more freely and pleasantly. She laughed at my little jokes (little they were), asked me about the sea, wondered how I could have had the heart to give up the life and liberty of the ocean, and spoke of the sailor's calling as the manliest in the world.

"What!" cried Amelia, "more manly than the soldier's?"

"Certainly," she answered; "they cannot be mentioned in the same breath. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Seymour?"

"Agree with you, Miss Hawke! indeed I do, from the bottom of my heart!" I answered; and I barely saved myself from adding that, had she decreed in favor of the soldier's life, I should have agreed with her with all my soul, just the same.

It was a very short walk to me. When Amelia said, "The cathedral, Jack, is in College Green there, just round the corner," I exclaimed, "I thought you said, Miss Hawke, that it was almost far enough for a drive. Were it five times farther it would not be too far for me."

Very hot it was, being a cloudless morning, and many a fathom we measured without meeting with the relief of an inch of shade; but though corpulence is not popularly supposed to revel in the dog-days, my fat and amiable cousin declared she enjoyed the heat, and walked as if perspiration had been prescribed; while the only effect produced on Miss Florence by the exercise and the temperature was a slight deepening of the delicate peach-like tint on her cheeks. As I swung along at her side, listening to her pretty voice and looking at her lovely face, it seemed difficult to realize that yesterday at that hour, ay, for some hours later, she had no existence, so far as I was concerned. Indeed, I seemed to have known her an age; a notion produced, probably, by my thoughts having been full of her from the moment I clapped eyes on her.

I should like to be able to write in praise of Bristol Cathedral. The mere circumstance of Florence Hawke living in the neighborhood ought to have made living poetry and beauty not only of the old pile, but of every brick and chimney-pot in the city. But there is a nakedness and a most unlovely grimness about the cathedral that renders admiration very difficult. Outside, the structure has the look of a fortress, and inside it is as naked as a stable. The pews, or benches, are crowded together at one end, where there is a small show of ecclesiastical furniture; and to reach those seats you have to navigate a small Atlantic Ocean of stone floor, with pillars on either side; and the sterility of the cold and stony scene is emphasized rather than relieved by here and there—as widely scattered as currants in a sailor's dumpling—a memorial of brass or marble. In most cathedrals there is something to look at. What is shown may be often a sham. Still, a small stock of faith will enable you to gaze with interest, as, for instance, at the Black Prince's armor at Canterbury, which, for all one knows, may have been manufactured at Birmingham, whence a great number of ancient relics are, I believe, annually exported. But Bristol Cathedral offers you nothing. Historic memories no doubt it has; but there is nothing to touch, to hang over, to muse upon, in the form of a tomb, an old banner, a stain on the flags, where some holy man gave up the ghost.

And yet one church Bristol has that atones for the unfurnished cathedral. I mean St. Mary Redcliffe. It is an architectural dream, most beautiful and tender. Why are not all churches equally lovely? Were they so, I am sure we should all be more religious. Ladies, St. Mary Redcliffe is a church to get married in. Why, even a wedding for money—ay, even the nuptials of a foolish old rich woman with a sneaking, rapacious young man—would take an idyllic charcter in a St. Mary Redcliffe. But I say, Bristolians, where got you that effigy of poor little Chatterton? Could anything be more foolish? I'm a Dutchman if it isn't like a memorial to a tomtit. Think of a structure resembling a shrine, surmounted by a caricature in little of a lord-mayor of the last century! Was Chatterton a genius? 'Pon my word, I never could understand his ancient lingo; but if he had no more talent than I have, who could not make a rhyme, though ten pounds of pure Virginia were offered me for a couplet, may I be hanged if I would have consented to the erection of such a scarecrow had I hailed from old Sebastian Cabot's port.

Well, Miss Hawke and my cousin and I entered the cathedral and joined the worshippers (few enough; but business is business, and this wasn't Sunday), and heard the anthem. A fine piece of rumbling music it was, and well sung. The memory of it would inspire me to attempt some elegant writing had I heard it in any other interior—say Durham, or Winchester (wherein I have knelt as a bairn), or Gloucester; but the nakedness of the building ran amuck with emotion. The dim, rich, holy light; the ghostly tatters of ancient banners, hovering like petrified bats in the gloom of a dark roof that has reverberated the orisons of generations; the stone warriors on their backs, with their mailed hands crossed upon their pale bosoms, and their noses gone to join their souls; the satyr-like effigies which glower like the nightmares of mad Chinamen from darksome corners—such and a score of other sacerdotal wonders which no man who has heaved at a capstan and sat astride a yard-arm can be expected to remember, were wanting as adjunct to that rolling and growling and swelling anthem in Bristol Cathedral.

And yet the grand melodies, the sweet and silver tenor notes, the tremulous thunder of the solemn organ, echo in my soul to this hour, as a sacred setting of that poem of womanhood who sat on my right hand in a posture of devotion, listening to the heavenly strains. Ay, depend upon it, that any girl who wants to enrich and make large and splendid a young man's idea of her cannot do better than carry him off to hear an anthem sung in a cathedral. The ball-room bequeaths the memory of white shoulders, sparkling eyes, waltzing measures, and so forth; the dinner-table pretty much the same thing, sometimes including the waltzing measures; the parlor experience is homely, and sentiment gets mixed up with darning, hemming and such matters. But to sit by the side of a lovely girl in a cathedral and hear an anthem sung is to enjoy a singular elevation of emotion. She becomes a part of the sacred entertainment. She humanizes the music, and the music spiritualizes her. This may be rather German as a piece of subtlety; but none the less it is true. I can tell you this: I understood that anthem all the better for looking at Florence Hawke; yes, and I found her sweetness the sweeter and her womanly beauty the womanlier for watching her and thinking of her to the tune that rolled out of the organ's melodious heart with a deep-throated reverberation that sometimes set the seat we were on quivering.

Service being over, we came away, and outside found Alphonso Hawke's carriage—a regal turn-out, quite in keeping with the gilt and velvet and marble of Clifton Lodge. There was a device on the panels that looked uncommonly like a lord's, and might have passed for something of the kind to a person not nicely acquainted with odds and ends of that sort.

"Is it too hot for a drive, dear, before we go home?" asked Miss Hawke—addressing Amelia, of course, for I was not dear yet.

"No; if it is not too hot to walk it is not too hot to drive," answered Amelia. "Would you like a drive, Jack?"

"Very much," said I; so we got into the carriage, Miss Hawke gave some directions to the footman, and off we went, honored by the notice of everybody we encountered. Indeed, I never before observed people stare so hard at a carriage as the Bristolians we met did at ours. The reason lay in the men's livery, I think. It was as gaudy as an alderman's, a blaze of crimson and gold, and they had white hair and shining stockings. We talked of the anthem, and Miss Hawke asked me what I thought of the cathedral. I gave her my opinion and she agreed with me.

"It is the only disappointment I have," said she. "We Australians are always dreaming of the antiquities of England; and when papa told me we were going to live near a cathedral, I pictured a place like Westminster Abbey, full of wonderful tombs, glorious windows, beautiful monuments, and sanctified spots railed off and hidden in twilight. However, it is better than no cathedral at all."

This was about the most sensible thing that was said during the drive; all the rest of the conversation was made up of the idle chatter which three persons—who are no company—will bestow on one another. The young ladies spoke of persons who were strangers to me; of Miss Jones's last dance; of Mrs. Robinson's projected garden-party; of Miss Chirrup learning singing with the idea of going on the stage. I had as much to say, too, as either of them; tried to be funny, and made them laugh anyhow. I took no notice of the course the coachman was steering; whether he was heading north or south I could not say. It was enough for me that I was sitting opposite Florence Hawke; that my knee touched the sacred hem—let me call it hem—of her exquisitely fitting dress; that I was breathing the atmosphere that her lovely presence made fragrant. I say, that was enough for me. What did it matter how old red-an-gold on the box pulled the reins? All that I desired was that he should not be in a hurry to carry us home. The drive was largely meant for me, I knew; and so now and again I would admire the scenery and ask whose house that was, and pretend to be interested in the landscape. But I have no recollection of the view. Nearly all that I can remember is Florence, her shining, winning eyes, the light upon her hair, the delicate tint upon her face, cast by the crimson parasol in her hand, her unaffected laughter, and best of all, shipmate, the real pleasure she seemed to find in my company, as if there was something in my talk that brightened up her spirits.

And why not? she loved Sydney, and I knew the place well. She liked sailors, and I had been one, and was still one at heart. She had made long voyages, and could understand me as only a girl might who had rounded the Horn twice, and knew what a four months' passage is. Might she not, then, have found a kind of salt-water flavor about me that would come as a kind of novelty to her now, and awaken pleasant thoughts?

By and by we came to a road that had two branches, one leading to Clifton Lodge, and the other to my uncle's house; and here Amelia asked Miss Hawke to accompany us home to lunch.

"I hoped you and Mr. Seymour would have lunched with *me*," said Miss Florence.

"As you please, dear," said Amelia, with the good-natured indifference to things which I have often taken notice of in fat people.

"Home!" warbled the sweet girl to the resplendent creature on the box; and presently we arrived at Clifton Lodge.

The old Arabian romancers were fond of bringing young men of various social standing and princesses together, and making the princesses overwhelm the young men with favors and sweetmeats, until the young men, bewildered by so much kindness and so much beauty, came at last to wonder whether they stood on their heels or their heads. As I followed the girls into Clifton Lodge, I must say my feelings very much resembled those of the Arabian young men. I had met a young princess, and by a combination of events over which I had no control, though I could not have marshalled them to greater advantage to myself had I the ordering of them, I was privileged to be in her company, and enjoy her conversation and society so continuously as to make the chances by which that spell of bliss came about quite singular to remember.

Take the circumstances in their order; first, her papa was away; then there was the meeting her on the previous night, and her stopping to dinner; then there was the arrangement with Amelia to hear the anthem, my stepping in and asking leave to go too, the walk to the cathedral, the sitting through the service, the drive, and now the invitation to lunch. It was all perfectly correct. I question if the most acidulated old lady living, bless her! could find an excuse for a scowl in any point of this narrative of my meeting and acquaintance with Florence Hawke so far. But, nevertheless, this girl and I were so much together at the first start that I say there was something singular in it.

She took my cousin up-stairs, and I was left alone in the drawing-room, where, after casting my eyes round the spacious apartment, and surveying the costly ornaments, the resplendent chairs, and the various other objects, with much wonder, and without the least pleasure, I opened an album, bound in silver and ivory, with Alphonso Hawke's crest (his *crest!*)—a kind of shield with something that looked like a goose perched on top of it, its wings extended, and its bill cocked up as though it were asking forgiveness for its absurd posture—and looked at the photographs. Here I found correct portraits of her gracious Majesty, likewise the late Prince Consort, and the Heir Apparent in Highland costume; also several persons of quality; and among these august and noble people there were scattered likenesses of the Hawke family and the most genteel of their friends. But the book was very thinly furnished. It was a show-volume, meant for visitors. The likenesses of Hawke's relations and early acquaintances and antipodean friends were, I suppose, kept in a separate book, intended for the use of the family and the domestics only.

But, in looking over this album, I came across a lovely profile likeness of Miss Florence. It was a Paris photograph, the shadowing and light very fine, the pose perfect in grace and refinement. She was seated, bending over a book, her hand to her forehead, and tresses of her hair delicately fringing her finger-tips. As I sat entranced the ladies entered. I was so full of the subject that I immediately exclaimed: "what an exquisite portrait this is, Miss Hawke!"

They both came up to look. When Miss Hawke saw that it was her likeness, she slightly smiled, her color deepened.

"It is considered good," said she.

"It is perfect!" said I, rapturously. "Have you one, Amelia?"

"One of my own?" asked Amelia.

"One of these," said I, and I pointed to the lovely portrait.

"No, Jack," answered Amelia.

"I had only a dozen," said Miss Florence, "and this, I believe, is the last of them. If you would like to have it, Amelia, you are very welcome to it, dear."

"May I extract it at once?" said I, and, without waiting for permission, I withdrew it tremblingly, but with extraordinary care, and said, "I will put it in my pocket and keep it for you, Amelia"; and so saying, I pocketed it.

All this was more significant than talking. Amelia giggled, and did not know how to look nor what to say. Miss Florence, on the other hand, threw a veil of charming, transparent tact over the little interlude, by coming close to the table, and saying, while she pointed to the portraits, "That is my father, Mr. Seymour, and that is my poor mother"; and as I stooped to peer at Mr. Alphonso Hawke's features a footman announced luncheon.

Cold chicken and tongue, cutlets and claret, and champagne and salad—of such was the modest repast composed; and I could not but think that the splendidly dressed flunkey who waited upon us was ashamed of the poverty of the meal. The table, in its abridged form, wanted at least five-and-twenty people to fill it, and I should think that seventy or eighty guests could very comfortably have dined in the great room that formed the ground floor of the largest wing of the house. The walls were crowded with pictures—whether good or bad I do know—and the furniture was very magnificently carved oak, the back of the sideboard being pretty nearly as tall as the room, and enriched with all sorts of cuttings.

Thought I, however old Hawke has earned his money, plenty of it he must have; and when I looked at the lovable, beautiful creature who sat at the head of the table, and whose figure was thrown into sweet relief by the handsome livery of the fellow who hung in the wake of her chair, and reflected upon the fortune she was pretty sure to step into—for, so far as I had learned, there was but another child—and considered the crowds of handsome young men and high-born young men—men who, if they had not the capacity of going forward, were capable of going back to any extent—who would be only too happy to mingle their blood with old Hawke's for the privilege of possessing his lovely daughter and his Australian sovereigns—I say that when I looked at her, and thought thus, my heart sank, a gloom fell upon my spirits, and I felt disposed to curse the chance that had made me acquainted with my uncle and led to my visit to Clifton.

By and by the footman went out of the room. I was fumbling over a peach, when Amelia said—quite sequentially, for the conversation led up to the remark—"Florence dear, are you glad or sorry that Mr. Morecombe is coming?"

"Now, you know, Amelia, that I don't care a snap of the finger either one way or the other," answered Miss Hawke, laughing.

"Is Mr. Morecombe a connection of yours, Miss Hawke?" said I, looking and talking innocently.

"Tell my cousin he would like to be, Florence," exclaimed Amelia, chuckling and squeezing grapes into her mouth, and looking at me with a kind of leer, as if she wished me to know she approved of my pretended ignorance.

"No, he is no connection," answered Miss Hawke, very quietly. "He is a son of Sir Reginald Morecombe, a person my father has a high regard for. He is coming here on a visit. Mr. Seymour, will you please give me a peach?"

What was the meaning of the smile that flitted over her face? Could she read in me that I was half mad to ask her if there was the faintest chance in the world af her complying with her papa's desire? Well, I must have been an ass to suppose that she could interpret my thoughts like that; yet, my mind was so full at that moment that I could not but suspect she had caught a glimpse of a portion of what was whirling and simmering in it.

"What is young Mr. Morecombe?" said I; "an army man?"

"He is nothing," said Miss Hawke.

"Very much nothing at all," observed Amelia. I waited breathless, thinking that Miss Hawke would speak in his favor.

"I am afraid he is rather a fool," said she; whereupon I laughed at the top of my voice.

"Why were fools invented?" I exclaimed, as lively as a sparrow, on a sudden; "to mitigate any spirit of discontent that might sometimes visit monkeys? or as standards for measuring the intellect of ladies?"

"Why do you say that?" cried Amelia. "Are woman only fit for fools?"

"No, no!" said I. "The women who are above fools can't be measured by them. I am speaking of women who allow fools to make love to them, and who end in marrying fools."

"A girl may marry a fool, and not know he is a fool until she finds him her husband," said Miss Hawke.

I wouldn't have contradicted her to have saved my life; but for all that, I didn't agree with her. A man, it is true, may prove a bigger fool after marriage to his wife than he seemed before, because his wife has had the chance of looking deeper into him; but, if ever he was a fool at all, he was a fool before his marriage, and the woman knew it.

"I should not object very much to stupid men," said Amelia, "if they were foolishly amiable, and not generally conceited. I don't profess to know much about Mr. Morecombe, but, so far as I have got, what annoys me most in him is this—when he puts his glass into his eye, and looks around, there can be no question that he thinks himself a person of consequence, and that he embellishes life. *He!* O, my dear! whenever I meet with what papa calls a swell, I always wonder how many feet high it would be necessary to mount into the air to look down and not be able to see the noble creature."

"How terribly democratic they are in America, Mr. Seymour," exclaimed Miss Hawke, laughing. "In Australia, you know, we reverence pedigree."

"Yes, the Australians are a loyal people; they believe in lords, and sing 'God save the Queen,'" said I. "And don't you see, Amelia, that your notion of going into the air and losing sight of the swell hits the man of genius too? Would little Thomas Moore have been visible three miles down?"

"Not his body, but the best part of him would," said Miss Hawke, "for Amelia could take the Irish Melodies into the air with her."

I should have praised this as a neat turn in anybody; but coming from Miss Florence it sounded to me incomparably fine. I was delighted, and said it was worthy of Hook. (Why Hook? I must have meant Hood.)

"Pray, Miss Hawke," said I, "where is Flora?"

"Flora? oh, poor, dear old Flora, I am sorry to say, is not well. The housekeeper is nursing her down stairs. But you are not sorry, *are* you? You think her vicious. Even had she been well, I should not have introduced her. And yet she cannot bite. She has no teeth."

"You should order a false set for her," says Amelia, with a sober face.

"I love poor old Flora," continued Miss Hawke, in her tender voice (observe. It was delightful to hear her say "I love." Her lips were made to form the words, her face to look the thought expressed!); "She was my mother's pet, and has been mine ever since mamma died. It will grieve me when poor old Flora goes; and I simply hate the coachman for telling me this morning that he's afraid she will not last much longer."

"Don't let the coachman distress you, said I softly. "I have a poor opinion of coachmen as a body. They know very little. Let them stick to horses and leave dogs alone."

"Jack, it is time to go," said Amelia, looking at the clock. "Why, Florence, your papa and Mr. Morecombe will be arriving at six o'clock and finding us still at lunch." And up she jumped.

Miss Hawke begged her not to be in a hurry, it was only half-past two. For my part, I should have been willing to stop until I had been turned out; but I could not stay without Amelia, and Amelia declared she must go; so my cousin went to put on her hat, and when that job—which kept me waiting twenty minutes—was performed, we bade Miss Hawke farewell and passed out of the house with all the state that could be conferred upon us by a footman holding open the door, a butler bowing, and another fellow in livery in the distance looking on.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my morning," said I, as we walked in the direction of my uncle's house.

"I am very glad to hear it," replied Amelia. "We want you to enjoy yourself while you are with us. And I hope you will not be in a hurry to go."

"You are all delightfully kind and good. This sort of life, I fear, will unfit me for lodgings in London. I am afraid it will make me want to get married, Amelia."

"Well," says she, laughing, "you ought not to find much trouble when you do make up your mind. You are very impressionable—you will not be hard to please, will you?"

"Why do you say that? Here I am twenty-five years old, and I have never been in love yet."

"That may be," said she; but you are in love now, aren't you?" I colored, hesitated, and then exclaimed:

"Yes, I think I am—I am pretty sure I am. How lovely she is! how gentle! how kind! who could help loving her?"

"That is what I mean by being impressionable," said Amelia, laughing pleasantly. "You arrived here last evening, it is now about three o'clock, and in that time you have fallen in love."

"Well, don't make a joke of it, Amelia. If it isn't permissible to fall in love with a girl like Florence Hawke almost as fast as one can look at her, why should nature allow the emotion to exist? eh, I think that's a puzzler, isn't it?" and I heard myself laughing harshly.

"I am not making a joke of it, Jack," answered Amelia. "I believe if I were a man I should fall in love with Florence myself. I don't mean to say that she is so *wondrously* beautiful as the gentlemen profess to find her; but she has a sweet character, and if I were a man that is what I should like best in a wife."

"Yes, and that is exactly what I like best in Florence." (What a horrible hypocrite I was!) And then, a cloud gathering upon my brow, "I wish," I mumbled, moodily, "I had never seen her. I shall have her on the brain and no good can come of it. Her father has got hold of the tiller, and will steer her as he wants, and the very sweetness of character you speak of is just an assurance that she will answer her helm. Besides, what chance should *I* stand, in any case?" And with my stick I let fly at the twigs of the hedge past which we were walking.

"I think she is disposed to like you, do you know, Jack?" said Amelia.

"What puts that into your head?"

"We were talking of you in the bedroom, and she said she enjoyed your frank manners. It was like going a voyage to sit with you, she said."

"Ah!"

"She also observed that the difference between a young man like Mr. Morecombe and a young man like you was the difference between the hot atmosphere of an evening party and the fresh breeze of the sea-shore. No!" she continued, "I'm wrong. It was I who said that. But she agreed with me so thoroughly that it was just the same as if she had said it."

"What else did she say?"

"Why," she answered, trying to remember, "I think she then changed the subject by speaking of her dog."

"May I smoke a cigar?" I asked. She gave me permission. "Can you explain," I asked, "how it is that Mr. Alphonso Hawke, if he is so very anxious to marry his daughter—both daughters, I presume—to blood, should be living here instead of in London, where his means would enable him to get the class of man he wants about him?"

"You say both daughters; but Emily Hawke is never likely to marry," answered Amelia. "The poor thing is little better than an invalid. She suffers from a weak or curved spine, and her chest is affected. Periodically she visits some fashionable doctor in London, and that is why, I believe, she is away with her father now. I am sure I cannot tell why Mr. Hawke does not live in London. Perhaps he is not so very sure of being able to get the society he likes. This place agrees with him and Emily, he told papa. Besides, if Mr. Morecombe comes up to his idea of an eligible young man, then, as he has got him, and as one is enough—for we are not Mormons at Clifton, Jack—he may think it would only be a waste of money to live in London for the sake of getting others."

"What do you mean by *got him*, Amelia?" I rattled out. "You don't mean to say that his marriage with Miss Florence is settled?"

"I believe it is, in Mr. Hawke's mind, and no doubt in young Morecombe's. But not in Florence's. She is not likely to accept a man she can ridicule."

"That's no guarantee," I muttered. "But, gracious mercy! if it is only a question of blood with Mr. Hawke, cannot he get higher than young Morecombe?"

"Yes, but he is evidently satisfied with the blood of the Morecombes."

"I wish I could spill it! I wish somebody would shed it!" I exclaimed. "If the father attacks his daughter on one side and the representative of the blood of the Morecombes attacks her on the other, she must yield; she is doomed; her amiability will be her fatality. She will be crushed under the ruins of her own good-nature."

"Is it not a little early for you to begin to tear your hair, Jack?" said Amelia, laughing heartily. "You really cannot have made up your mind upon the state of your heart yet. Wait a little."

"Whatever may be the state of my heart, Amelia," said I, "I have bared it to you, and you will respect the solemn secrets you have beheld in it."

"Oh, certainly."

"You will not breathe a word of this conversation to your papa or mamma?"

"Not a syllable. There is nothing to breathe." And as she said this, with difficulty preserving her gravity, we entered the grounds of my uncle's house.

CHAPTER V.

MR. ALPHONSO HAWKE.

It is a mistake to ask a woman not to breathe a syllable. She cannot be trusted, least of all with another person's love-secret. She can keep her own, but not yours or mine. And, indeed, very often she cannot keep her own. I remember a young gentleman telling me that, having fallen in love with a girl, he proposed to her in a very neat letter that had cost him nearly a quire of expensive paper. She answered by return, declining his offer, hoping he would forgive her and they would be friends. She had destroyed his letter, she said, and as she did not mean to breathe a syllable of what had passed between them, she hoped he would be silent too. Meanwhile, he was to be sure to come to their dance next so-and-so. Well, his heart having been declined, it suited him very well to be silent, and nothing but his faith in her promise of secrecy, coupled with his anxiety to gaze on her once more, could have furnished him with sufficient fortitude to present himself at the dance given by the young lady's mamma. The behavior of the numerous family satisfied him that nobody knew he had proposed to the girl, and he danced in a collected and easy frame of mind. But what was the truth? He ultimately won the girl's love, and when they were married she said: "Of course, Montague, I showed your letter to papa and mamma, and my brothers and sisters, and poor Aunt Jane—you remember dear Aunt Jane?—for was it to be supposed, Montague, that I could hide such a *serious* thing as an offer of marriage from my family?"

Amelia served me in that way. She went and told Sophie that I had confessed—"Yes, my dear, *confessed*—only think!"—to be deeply in love with Florence Hawke; Sophie gave the news to her mother, who handed it on to my uncle. No doubt they all pledged one another to secrecy. But my uncle could not hold his tongue; and on the evening of the day on which I had lunched with Miss Hawke, the ladies having retired to rest, and he and I being alone, sitting in the open window and smoking cigars, he spoke as follows:

"So, my boy" (and this was the delicate way in which he approached the subject), "they tell me you are head over ears in love with Florence Hawke."

"Who are they?" I observed.

"All your relations," he answered. "But why d'ye want to keep it a secret? and yet I don't know. You're right to be sly if you're sincere; for if Hawke twigs your sentiment, stand by! But I say, Jack, how on earth can you be in love with a girl you have only met once or twice, and have only heard of during the last twenty-four hours?"

"I'm sure I can't tell you," said I.

"Why, it took me eight months to make up my mind to offer for your aunt—a handsomer woman then than Florence is now; make no mistake about that, sir. A proper female—a lady in heart and a woman in beauty, young man."

"That she is still," said I.

"Yes, every inch of her. Eight months, I say, it took me to resolve, and here are you ripe in less than twenty-four hours for the parson to operate on. But this is the age of locomotives, the sixty-miles-an-hour epoch, and a correct portrait of the period should represent it as pelting before a hurricane, holding its gray hair on with both hands."

"I think you forge ahead a trifle too fast," said I. "I greatly admire Miss Hawke, and so do you." He nodded. "But when you speak of my being desperately in love, you're giving a character to my admiration that I really can't say it yet possesses."

"Well, my lad," said he, "I don't know what's in your mind, nor does it matter, but I'll tell you this, you'll be a lucky fellow if you win her. I should say she's good for ten thousand pounds, if a penny, with more to come. Moreover, she is a lady, which is a fine thing for one's friends, and a beauty, which is a fine thing for one's self. Any help I can give you, Jack, you may command. Your aunt may hang a bit in the wind, as she's got to work the sense of duty to her neighbor off her mind; but your cousins are at your service, and, with a pair of clever girls to do your love-errands, you should be able to outweather Old Nick himself, were he Florence's papa."

Though I could talk as off-handedly as he, I was not without a stock of native modesty; and we were now upon a subject which sentiment had, to a certain extent, consecrated, and which I felt ought to be approached hat in hand, so that I did not much care to humor my uncle's irreverent, commercial and half-jeering allusions to it. I therefore, without much trouble, drew him away from the subject, and was presently splitting my sides over some capital Yankee stories he related; though, when I went to my bedroom, I hung for a long half hour over Miss Florence's photograph, and, when in bed, lay so long a time full of thought that the sparrows were twittering on the trees when I fell asleep. Was I to get no rest at Clifton?

Next morning I took my cousins for a drive in the phaeton, and when we were fairly under way I said to Amelia, "Do you remember promising not to breathe a syllable?"

"Of what," asked she.

"Of our talk yesterday, when we returned from Clifton Lodge."

"Yes, I kept my word. Sophie asked questions, particularly if you were not in love with Florence, and I said yes, you were."

"And why shouldn't we know?" exclaimed good-natured Sophie. "We are naturally interested in you, and in Florence, too."

I had to thank her for this, which, of course, put an end to my reproaches.

"By-the-bye, Jack," said Amelia, "I forgot to ask you for Florence's portrait, which you very kindly put into your pocket to keep for me."

"I'll go on keeping it for you," I replied. "You may trust me; it will be quite safe."

Both the girls laughed, and Amelia said, "I did not tell you, Sophie, that when Jack was admiring Florence's portrait she turned to me and asked me if I would like it. Do you think she was sure it would find its way through me to Jack, or through Jack to me? Upon my word, she is a deep little thing."

"Is she a flirt?" I asked, not much relishing my cousin's applause of her.

"If she were, should I tell you?" answered Amelia, laughing loudly. "No, no; there is such a thing as *esprit de corps* among women; we may sneer at one another among ourselves, but right-minded females never expose the sex's infirmities to the common enemy."

"Besides, Jack," said Sophie, "no girl is supposed to know whether another is a flirt or not. It is for men to make the discovery."

Well, to be sure, all this was very twopenny talk, the chatter of three young relations driving along a road in a phaeton; but it pleased and amused me. I found that these girls enjoyed conversing on the subject of love, and that they were quite disposed to encourage me to make a fool of myself over Miss Hawke. There are women who like to set people quarrelling with one another, and there are women who like to set people making love to one another. My cousins were of this order, and their papa, perhaps, knew their peculiarity when he spoke of them as a couple of clever girls, willing to run on any errands I might want to put them to.

And, upon my word, if I were a girl, I should think that the next best fun to having a sweetheart is to act as factotum to a pair of lovers; to enjoy the confidence of both; to patch up damaged feelings; to convey letters, and see the comedy, as I may say, from the wings instead of from the front. But it is a woman's business, and, to perform her part to her own and the satisfaction of others, she not only requires plenty of leisure, but she must be emotional, if not hysterical, and exceedingly amiable; nor, perhaps, can she be held absolutely qualified for the arduous post unless she is able to show that she has been in love herself, and knows what blighted feelings are.

We returned home at half-past 12, and as I drove up to the door, I saw my uncle walking under the trees with a tall man wearing a beard, his upper lip shaved

"It's Mr. Hawke!" said Amelia, and when the girls alighted, they went up to him and shook hands. I followed, when the groom was near enough to catch the reins I flung to him, and my uncle introduced me. Mr. Hawke made a very stately bow. This was evidently the first he had heard of me; and when he regained his ramrod erectness, he scrutinized me with as keen a pair of eyes as were ever levelled at a youth. He was a tolerably good-looking man; tall, and well dressed. He was certainly very different from the burly Colonial I had somehow pictured him. He carried a very grave expression of face, and the skirts of his coat being long, and his beard hiding the furniture of his neck, he might have been mistaken for a clergyman. A pair of gold eye-glasses dangled upon his ample surface of waistcoat, a large diamond flashed upon one hand, that was ungloved, and in the other hand was a stout cane, adorned with a heavy gold knob. I noticed that he spoke slowly, with a degree of deliberation that was both tiresome and disturbing, as it suggested not only a solicitude as to his choice of words, but misgivings as to his capacity of delivering them when selected.

Sophie asked after his daughter Emily.

"Thank you, Miss Seymour, she is as well as we have a right to expect. Sir Timothy Tomson thinks that no change of air is at present necessary. The journey home fatigued her—aw—poor thing, but a night's rest has, I am happy to say, restored her." And then, addressing me, "What do you think of Clifton, sir? Is this your first—aw—your first visit?"

"It is," I replied. "I only arrived the night before last, but what I have seen delights me."

"And, mind you, Mr. Hawke," says my uncle, "my nephew Jack's opinion is not to be despised, for he has visited Sydney harbor."

"Oh, you know Sydney, indeed!" exclaimed the old fellow, as if my knowing Sydney rather disconcerted him. "Pray, how do you know Sydney?"

"As a sailor, sir."

"Oh, as a sailor? yes, just so. You will not—aw—have much acquaintance with it. My recollection is, that sailors are only allowed to go ashore—I believe—aw—that is the expression—to go ashore at night, as they have to work all day."

"Quite right," said I. "I see that you know something about the nautical calling."

"Not much, not much, indeed," he replied, never relaxing his distressing gravity, and speaking as if, on the whole, any knowledge of the nautical calling was calculated to lead to social prejudice. "Having lived in Australia, I have—aw—had necessarily to cross the ocean to reach England, and have had opportunities of inspecting—well—aw—perhaps not of inspecting—of witnessing—"

"In short," cut in my uncle, unceremoniously, "you have seen enough of Jack's life to know something about it."

"Ah, yes," replied Mr. Hawke, giving a little scowl round, to let us understand that he had been at no loss for words. "You didn't, perhaps," continued he, addressing me, "know Sir Wilkinson Smith at Sidney?"

"No," said I.

"Nor his very charming lady, who, by the way, Mr. Seymour," speaking to my uncle, "turns out to be a connection of Lord Wear, my friend Sir Reginald Morecombe's cousin."

"We should call that a coincidence in Canada," said my uncle, giving me a look. "By the way, Mr. Hawke, have you brought Mr. Morecombe along with you to Clifton?"

Mr. Hawke answered yes, and that he and Florence were out riding—a piece of news that caused Sophie to steal a peep at me, while it excited in the depths of my soul an evil wish that the fellow would break his neck before he got home.

We stood, all five of us conversing for some time under the trees. It did not take me long to discover that Mr. Alphonso Hawke was a pompous old bore, with an early training and history of which he was ashamed, and to the veneering of which he was devoting his declining years. I was struck by his way of speaking, the cautious manner in which he groped along with his tongue, saying aw and ah merely to enable him to pause and make sure, and the fine airs he put on (which he may have seen and admired in Sir Wilkinson Smith and his charming lady, a connection of the Morecombes) when he addressed my cousins. His want of ease was the most harassing part of him. He was, indeed, one of those men to whom you long to say, "For goodness sake, try *not* to be genteel, and pray cease to act as a person of breeding. Drop an h, sir, for the comfort of your friends, now and then. Kindly, be vulgar and natural."

At last he went away, declining my uncle's invitation to stop to lunch with a large and portly wave of the hand and a smile that exposed what I suspected then, and know now, to have been a set of splendid false teeth. He gave the ladies an immense bow as he quitted them, and I watched with an emotion almost of awe the solemnity of his tread and and the full-blown dignity of his consequential carriage as he walked by my uncle's side to the gate.

"Well, Jack," said my uncle, returning and looking at me with a grin, "what d'ye think of your future father-in-law?"

"Hush, papa! for gracious goodness sake!" cried Amelia, in a terrified voice, casting her eyes in the direction in which old Hawke had disappeared.

"Tut, tut!" said my uncle, "he's out of hearing, silly."

"He fits the character you gave him to a hair," said I. "He is a prig."

"Ay, a prig!" exclaimed my uncle, "but isn't he a fine specimen of one? isn't he worth knowing *as* a prig? You're not going to meet with such a sample as that every day, my hearty. May I be shivered if the sight of him alone isn't worth a long journey."

"Really, papa," said Sophie, remonstratively, "he is our friend, dear. He is Florence's father. If we cannot speak well of him, let us say nothing."

"True," said I; "he is Florence's papa. We must speak well of him."

"Sophie, my love," said my uncle, with fine gravity, "let us, as the moralist says, clear our minds of cant. Who would care to have, who would be bothered with acquaintances, if the knowing them were conditional on never saying anything ill-natured behind their backs? Do you think Hawke don't sneer at *me*? Do you suppose that he doesn't ridicule my wideawake, the cut of my boots, my indifference to the aristocracy as lords and ladies—*not*, Jack, as men and women? No, I can respect honest people even when they *are* titled. But though Hawke sneers at me, he asks me to dine with him; and though I laugh at his cheap pretensions, I accept his invitation and return it."

"It's the way of the world, Sophie," said I. "But I own that Mr. Hawke is a bigger disappointment than I expected. How the dickens came his most lovely daughter to be a relative of his?"

"I say, Jack," cried my uncle rather maliciously, "did you hear him say that Florence and young Morecombe were out riding? Man, you must keep your weather eye lifting. Don't let this be a stern chase, for the pretty little craft will have been boarded by the fellow who is already abreast of her before you can come up with her."

"Pray don't make my admiration of the girl too significant," said I, not liking his banter at all. "If Morecombe boards her it will be because she allows him to do so. And if I don't overhaul her it may be because I reckon my spars more valuable than the chase's capture."

"Don't talk Greek!" exclaimed Sophie, who had listened eagerly. "What with boarding and overhauling and stern-chasing and such stuff, it is impossible to find out your meaning."

"There is no meaning to find out," said I. And here my aunt stood up in the window and called out that lunch was ready.

To be continued.